

- **Membrane module for cleaning membrane** filtration modules, comprises porous **membranes**, and a venturi device for providing entrained gas bubbles in a liquid flow which then passes through the **membrane**.

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IN JORDAN, E J; ZHA, F

PA (USFF-N) USF FILTRATION & SEPARATIONS GROUP INC; (USFI) US FILTER
WASTEWATER GROUP INC; (JORD-I) JORDAN E J; (ZHAF-I) ZHA F

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NOVELTY - A **membrane** module (5) comprises porous **membranes** (6) arranged in close proximity to one another and mounted to prevent excessive movement, and a venturi device (12) for providing, from within the module, gas bubbles entrained in a liquid flow. The entrained liquid and gas bubbles move past the surfaces of the **membranes** to dislodge fouling materials.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION - INDEPENDENT CLAIMS are also included for:

(a) scrubbing method of a **membrane** surface using a liquid medium with gas bubbles entrained, including entraining the gas bubbles into the liquid medium by flow of the liquid medium past a source of gas, and flowing the gas bubbles and liquid

medium along the **membrane** surface to dislodge fouling materials;

(b) method of removing fouling materials from the surface of porous hollow fibers mounted and extending longitudinally in an array forming a **membrane** module as disclosed above;

(c) a **membrane** bioreactor including a tank which have the **membrane** module as disclosed above; and

(d) method of operating a **membrane** bioreactor stated above by introducing feed into the tank, applying vacuum to the fiber while supplying gas bubbles.

USE - The **membrane** module is used for cleaning **membrane** filtration modules, and is also used in a **membrane** reactor.

ADVANTAGE - The advantages of the invention are:

(i) By using a venturi device, it is possible to generate gas bubbles to scrub **membrane** surfaces without the need for a pressurized gas supply;

(ii) The **liquid** and the **gas** phases are well mixed in the venturi and then diffuse into the **membrane** module to scrub the **membranes**. Where a jet type device is used to forcibly mix the **gas** into the **liquid** medium, a higher velocity of the bubble stream is produced. In treatment of wastewater, the thorough mixing provides excellent oxygen transfer;

(iii) The flow of gas bubbles is enhanced by the liquid flow along the **membrane** resulting in a large scrubbing shear force being generated, providing a positive fluid transfer and aeration with the ability to independently adjust flow rates of **gas** and **liquid**;

(iv) The injection of a mixture of two-phase fluid into the holes of the air distribution device can eliminate the formation of dehydrated solids and prevent gradual blockage of the holes;

(v) The injection arrangement provides an efficient cleaning mechanism for introducing cleaning chemicals effectively into the depths of the module while providing scouring energy to enhance chemical cleaning;

(vi) The module configuration allows higher packing density in a module without increasing solid packing. This adds an additional flexibility that the **membrane** modules can either be integrated into the aerobic basin or arranged in a separate tank;

(vii) The positive injection of a **mixture** of **gas** and **liquid** feed to each **membrane** module provides a uniform distribution of process fluid around **membranes**, thus minimizing the feed concentration polarization during filtration;

(viii) The filtration efficiency is enhanced due to a reduced filtration resistance; and

(ix) The cleaning method can be used to the treatment of drinking water, wastewater and the related processes by **membranes**.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING(S) - A schematic side elevation of the **membrane** module.

Membrane module 5

Membranes 6

Venturi device 12

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